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EDITORIALS

A BASIC SCIENCE LAW—WOULD IT BETTER CONDITIONS IN CALIFORNIA?

Reason for Considering a Basic Science Law.
If we affirm that a basic science law for California would serve our public health standards to better advantage, it would be proper for the nonsectarian medical profession of California to prepare a basic science bill that could be presented to the 1931 legislature.

If, however, we believe that a basic science law could be of no special value to the members of the lay public and of the medical profession, then the time necessary to the study and consideration of such a proposed basic science statute might well be given to other matters of nearer and greater importance to the profession.

Because the subject is one of great importance, it is again discussed in this column. Readers who wish to revive their knowledge of basic science laws are referred to articles in this column which appeared in the October 1927 number, page 525, and in subsequent issues.

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Interesting Analysis of Basic Science Laws by H. E. Kelly, Esq.—An interesting and plausible discussion of basic science statutes from the pen of H. E. Kelly, Esq., who has been legal adviser to two state medical boards, was printed in the

August 17 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Mr. Kelly himself by no means seems convinced that these new basic science statutes would bring about an improvement in present medical licensure conditions, unless it perhaps might be in those states which are suffering from the evils of the multiple board system. California, with its medical or non-sectarian, its osteopathic, and its chiropractic boards, is a good example of a state with multiple examining boards.

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California's Multiple Examining Boards.—Each of these California boards, according to the powers conferred upon it by the legislative authorities, lays down its own standards of preliminary and of professional education and training, and determines for itself whether or not the applicants who seek licenses from it possess the proper qualifications for licensure in its group. It is to be remembered, however, as a matter of fact, that no matter how the laws restrict the nature of practice that such written limitations are as a rule disregarded in active practice. The majority of osteopaths and chiropractors probably practice medicine and surgery far beyond the limits outlined in the laws recognizing their groups.

The major item of interest to members of the medical profession is not whether these various cultist boards should exist, for they already do exist; and all their various licentiates have been given legal rights that in a general way cannot now be taken from them by new legislation. Nor is the obligation which the nonsectarian profession here faces primarily one of betterment of the standards of the different cultist boards. For intrusion or interference by the nonsectarian profession with the workings of cultist boards would not only be not welcomed but probably would be much resented by the licentiates of cultist boards. Moreover, if such objection to interference by the nonsectarian profession were carried by the cultist boards to the people for ballot decision, the voters of California (who through initiative acts have given the osteopathic and chiropractic boards their present laws), would almost to a certainty uphold these cultist boards in opposition to their outside interference.

In the opinion of most nonsectarian physicians the recognition of cultist boards—and that comprehends the recognition of different standards of preliminary education and professional qualifications—does not make for the best protection of the public health. Of course it should be self-evident that all practitioners should be made to have the same relative amount of preliminary education and professional training, no matter what their beliefs concerning disease and injury, or what their therapeutic and other practices might be. Nevertheless, with many citizens it is not self-evident, and an attempted clarification to better educate the laity would probably resolve itself into a discussion about as profitless as one on religion, when the opposing sides have no common ground to stand upon.